



# Spinal Connection

## Spinal Connection

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Spinal Connection is published quarterly by the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission.

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Spinal Connection is an official publication of the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission. The Commission was established by Act 311 of 1975. On July 1, 2019, the Commission became a public health program under the Arkansas Department of Health as initiated by the Transformation and Efficiencies Act of 2019 (Act 910).

## From the Director ~ Terra Patrom

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### **Summertime**

With summer comes our adventurous side. Family reunions, BBQ's, lake days - you name it. Issues to be mindful of is sun and medications. Many times, the two don't mix well. Make sure you review your medications and follow the information provided regarding sun exposure. Remember to take into consideration the higher your injury level, you may not have the ability to sweat below your injury level to keep your body temperature down. Here's a few ideas to keep in mind while enjoying your summer.

It's great to get outdoors but keep in mind:

- 1) Stay hydrated - Drink lots of fluids, including water.
- 2) Use sunscreen - You may lack sensation in certain areas of your body, so you won't necessarily know when you are getting sunburnt. Reapply as recommended.
- 3) Stay cool - Get in the shade or wear an oversized sun hat.
- 4) Bring extra catheter supplies - You will be drinking more water (fluids) so you will probably need to cath more than usual.
- 5) Another "stay cool" idea - Bring a watering fan. Many stores have hydrating fans that blow cool air and mist you with water. They are generally battery operated. Some can be charged but they are more expensive.
- 6) Carry an Autonomic Dysreflexia Emergency Card on you - If you have an injury level above T-6, this is always a must - not just when you are out and about for the summertime.

These are only a small number of ideas. Many of you have several others so feel free to share on our Facebook page. Let's hear from you!

## Contact Information

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**Toll-free:** (800) 459-1517  
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**Website:** [ascc.ar.gov](http://ascc.ar.gov)

## Donations

ASCC accepts tax-deductible donations.

Send your donation to:

AR Spinal Cord Commission  
5800 W 10th St.  
Suite 108  
Little Rock, AR 72204

## Trauma Rehab Call Center

1-855-767-6983  
(FREE 24/7 Access)

Help & Information  
for Arkansans with Spinal  
Cord Injury & Healthcare  
Providers

## Call or Text 9-8-8

The national suicide and mental  
health crisis lifeline is live.

## In this issue...

From the Director	Page 1
AD Signs/Symptoms	Page 2
Medically Speaking	Page 3
Condolences	Page 4
SB Camp	Page 5
Facebook Page	Page 6

# AUTONOMIC DYSREFLEXIA:

A Life-Threatening Condition for People with Spinal Cord Injury



## AUTONOMIC DYSREFLEXIA (AD)

is a condition where the brain is unable to receive signals of distress from the nervous system (full bladder/bowel, pain, infection, etc.), requiring the body to utilize other methods to convey information.

Those with SCI at the sixth nerve of the thoracic spine or above are most commonly at risk, and in some cases the seventh and eighth nerve. Complete/Incomplete injuries are also at risk.

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

There are several symptoms, but the most dangerous is significant elevation in blood pressure (BP). Left untreated AD can result in stroke or death. The BP of a person with spinal cord injury (SCI) is generally lower than an able-bodied person. A normal reading of **120/80** could be **life-threatening for a SCI patient**. Thus it is important to find out your patient's "usual/baseline" blood pressure.

- Sudden/Significant Elevation of BP
- Severe Headache
- Profuse Sweating
- Goosebumps
- Blurred Vision
- Seeing Spots
- Flushed Skin
- Nasal Congestion
- Slowed Pulse
- Tightness of Chest
- Anxiety

## WHAT CAUSES AD?

AD has many potential causes, specifically any painful or irritating stimuli below the level of injury, such as:

- Bladder/Organ Distention
- Urinary Tract Infection
- Hemorrhoids
- Constrictive Clothing
- Sexual Intercourse
- Pregnancy
- Scrotal Compression
- Menstruation

## EMERGENCY TREATMENT

- + Sit up or raise head to 90°. Remain upright until BP is normal.
- + Loosen or remove tight clothing.
- + Check/empty bowel or bladder.
- + Call health care professional, even if symptoms go away.
- + Monitor BP every 5 minutes.



Paralyzed Veterans  
of America



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### Adaptive Sports

Exercise and activity are important to your health and relationships. Finding an exercise or sport you enjoy and can participate in on a regular basis can add immensely to your health and improve the quality of your life. My wife has found pickleball to be a great exercise and social outlet for her after retirement and feels as healthy and energetic as ever. She has made many new friends and her opportunities to interact with others have greatly increased around an activity that is improving her health. She forwarded me some information about an adaptive pickleball venue for people in wheelchairs and I want to forward that information to you, but also want to make you aware of other adaptive sports that you can be involved in even if you have a spinal cord injury and are in a wheelchair.



Thomas Kiser, MD

Dani Espiritu, an Occupational Therapy Student at the University of Central Arkansas, will be hosting a Wheelchair Pickleball Program/Clinic at the River Center this summer. By the time this is published you might miss them, but they are scheduled at 9am-12pm May 31st, June 7th, 12th, 19th, 26th, July 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th at the River Center in Benton, AR. She can be reached at 1-562-685-6344 or [despiritu@uca.edu](mailto:despiritu@uca.edu) to discuss this opportunity and possibly future opportunities. There is more information available about pickleball and other opportunities at the following web site: <https://usapickleball.org/>.

Other local opportunities are:

- 1) Getting involved with the local basketball team the Rollin' Razorbacks. They have a public Facebook group if you want to check them out (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/100297096713225>). If you are an athlete looking for an athletic challenge, no matter your sport, you can get involved in the competitive sport of basketball, because your skill set can be channeled to help the team. I talked to Jared Johnson, a player and coach, and if you have athletic skills and a competitive nature, they want you to call them and try out wheelchair basketball. They have some funding and extra chairs for you to try out the sport. They travel and go out of state for tournaments and are competitive at the national level. Jared can be reached at 1-501-240-1529. If you are interested, call him and he will discuss how you can get started and become a Rollin' Razorback.
- 2) Going on special adaptive hunts and outings coordinated by the Southern Sportsmen Foundation and Mike Cranford. This is an organization that works closely with the Wounded Warriors

organization, and they often try to have a 50/50 mix of veterans and civilians at their events with approximately eight people at a time. They have some adaptive equipment available to help get you started, and they also can direct you and help with funding if you need special equipment to be successful. They can be contacted by phone at 1-903-826-3318, on Facebook ([fb.me/sharingtheoutdoors](https://fb.me/sharingtheoutdoors)), or online at <https://www.sharingtheoutdoors.com/>. I have seen many of my patients really thrive in this environment and you do not have to be an outdoors person or hunter to start getting involved. Each group has a mix of expertise and they learn from each other. They have two main events a year: A youth event the first week in November - this year November 3-5; and an adult event later in November - this year November 14-17. Both events are held in Foreman, Arkansas. You can get involved by filling out an application on their website: <https://www.sharingtheoutdoors.com/>

- 3) Calling your local Recreation Centers in your hometown and asking about wheelchair accessibility and wheelchair sports. If they do not have anything, you can become the local trailblazer to get it started. The center at Bishop Park in Bryant is starting up some adaptive recreation activities and can be contacted at 1-501-943-0444. The River Center in Benton, which has started the wheelchair pickleball clinic, can be contacted at 1-501-776-5970, or the Hayes Center in North Little Rock, which has a chair volleyball program, can be contacted at 1-501-975-4297.

Below I have included some information I received from the American Spinal Injury Association annual conference in Atlanta, GA. These are programs that are up and running, and they can provide you information about their sport and how to get involved.

Other sports that are available:

- **Wheelchair softball:** <https://www.wheelchairsoftball.org>
- **Wheelchair boccia/bocce:** <https://pva.org/adaptive-sports>
- **Adaptive golf:** <https://turnstone.org/sports-rec>
- **Wheelchair tennis:** <https://pva.org/adaptive-sports>

## Our sincere condolences to the friends and family of...

Christopher Steinheiser 06/14/22  
 Haley E. Davis 07/04/22  
 Steven L. Scott 07/04/22  
 Donald R. Clark 08/07/22  
 Lewis J. Cardin 10/05/22  
 Edward C. Lee 12/13/22  
 Harry E. Sylar 12/20/22  
 Elizabeth Dewitt 12/27/22  
 Darlyne Womack 01/04/23  
 Betty J. Sinclair 01/09/23  
 Aron Cochran 01/29/23  
 Joey C. Faubus 02/06/23  
 Jason W. Papageorge 02/06/23  
 William B. Turner 02/10/23  
 Alicia Flippen 02/24/23  
 John Kimer 02/27/23  
 Elaine Canady 02/28/23  
 Alma Fluker 03/07/23  
 Kenneth H. Barton 03/08/23  
 Kathleen Trammel 03/15/23  
 Vivian D. Cullins 03/27/23  
 Cathy R. Robinson 03/27/23  
 Hugh Cowling 03/30/23  
 Virgil R. Odom 03/31/23  
 Calvert McGee 05/12/23  
 David A. Tabor 05/15/23



- **Wheelchair fencing:** <https://www.paralympic.org/wheelchair-fencing> or <https://moveunitedsport.org/sports/adaptive-sports/>
- **Wheelchair Basketball:** <https://www.paralympic.org/wheelchair-basketball>, <https://turnstone.org/sports-rec>, or <https://pva.org/adaptive-sports>
- **Power Soccer:** <https://moveunitedsport.org/sports/adaptive-sports/> or <https://turnstone.org/sports-rec>
- **Wheelchair rugby:** <https://www.uswra.org/>, <https://pva.org/adaptive-sports>, or <https://moveunitedsport.org/sports/adaptive-sports/>
- **Adaptive archery:** <https://moveunitedsport.org/sports/adaptive-sports/> or <https://www.paralympic.org/archery>
- **Adaptive water skiing:** <https://learnwatersports.com/adaptive-waterskiing/>
- **Adaptive rock climbing:** [www.commonclimber.com/adaptive-climbing](http://www.commonclimber.com/adaptive-climbing) or <https://www.climbroca.com/adaptiveclimbing>
- **Wheelchair Lacrosse:** <https://www.usalacrosse.com/wheelchair-lacrosse>

## Spina Bifida Camp

Spina Bifida / Spinal Disorders Camp was held July 9-14 at Camp Aldersgate, a nonprofit, which is located in a quiet, rustic area of west Little Rock near Baptist Health Medical Center. ASCC was thrilled to be able to cover the cost for 23 campers this year. We have found that camp is an excellent opportunity for children with spinal cord disabilities to increase their independence while enjoying outdoor recreation experiences, arts and crafts, sports, swimming, fishing, music, drama, and nature hikes. The campers also learn skills in self care, wheelchair mobility and maintenance, and self esteem. For many campers, this is a unique opportunity to be around other children with similar disabilities (sometimes for the first time).





**Spinal Connection (Summer 2023)**  
**Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission**  
**5800 W 10th St, Suite 108**  
**Little Rock, AR 72204**

## Find us on

Don't forget to like and follow us on Facebook at [\*\*fb.me/arspinalcord\*\*](https://fb.me/arspinalcord)

We post and share relevant and current information, such as:

- ▶ Spinal Connection Newsletter
- ▶ Job Openings
- ▶ Upcoming Events
- ▶ Information Shared from Vendors
- ▶ Accessible Parking Laws
- ▶ Spinal Disorders Camp
- ▶ Grants, Scholarships, & Fundraisers
- ▶ ASCC Conferences
- ▶ Holiday Closures
- ▶ Support Group Meetings
- ▶ Voting Information
- ▶ Urgent Information